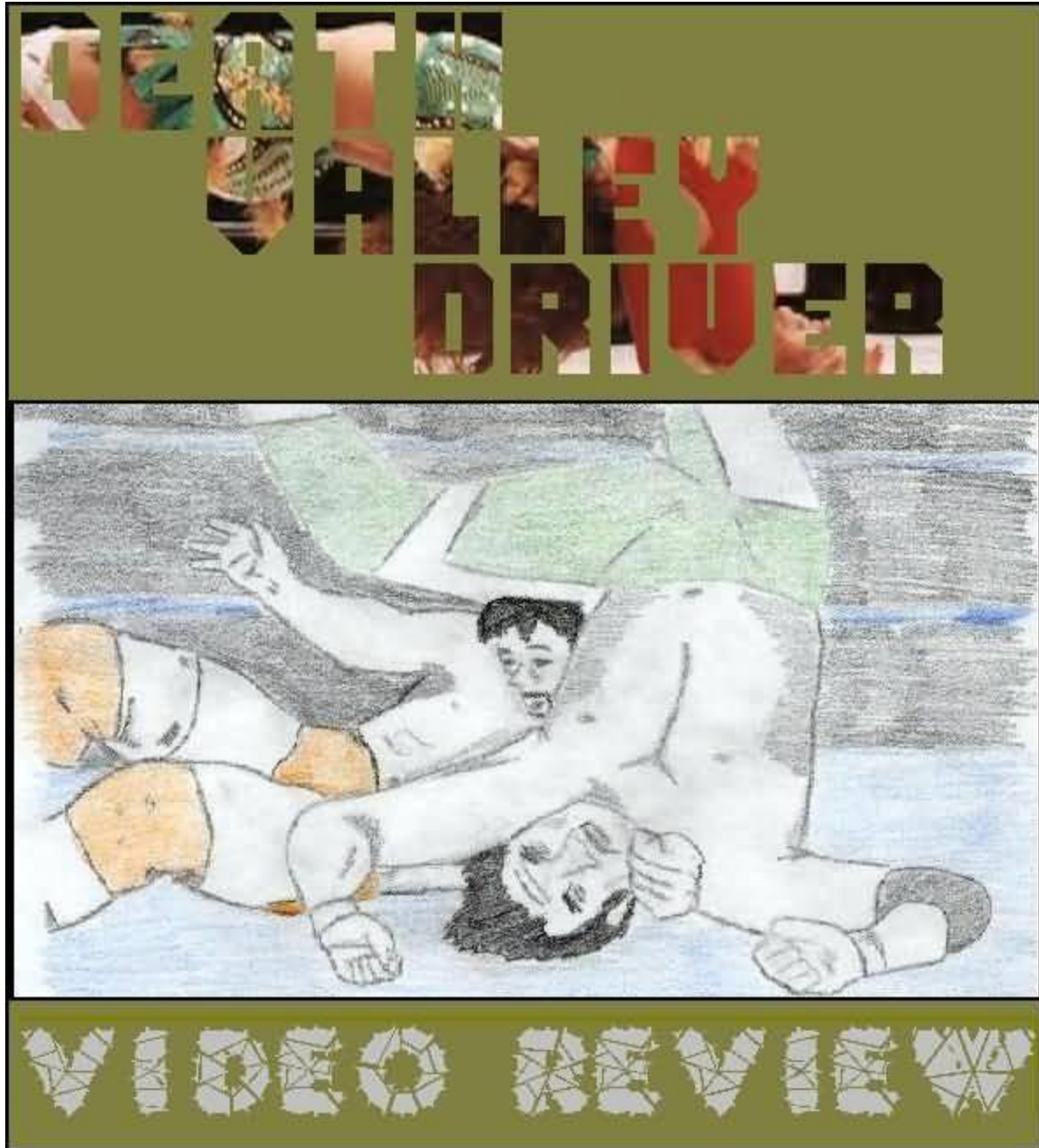




The cover is the creation of Matt Hollenger- an talented young artist/ wrestling freak out of the great state of Iowa.

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #119!

Hlya! We're a little late this time out because I just got onto Napster and I've spent all my freetime trying to figure out which Queen solo projects to subject myself to and figure out which Hawkwind mp3's to download (FEEL FREE TO SUGGEST SOMETHING). Plus I got promoted to middle management at work so I've been spending time growing my moustache and looking for a suitable Member's Only jacket. And then the message board crashed and that took a day to ruin and de-ruin, and I had to learn Queen's "You're My Best Friend" to sing at my old

girlfriend's wedding reception as the mighty Nixon Years bring the AM sounds to another wedding since the lingering latent sexual tension has long since completely died and we can all get on with our lives and shit, and Anyway, Fuck the world, we're all about the reviewing of the Professional Wrestling so I'll can the chatter and welcome back that bad-ass motherfucker, THE MACK MIKE NAIMARK.....

The MIDNIGHT SHOOT REVIEWER WHAT REVEIWS SHOOT AT MIDNIGHT! by MIKE NAIMARK

Remember the good old days? You know, back when real men did battle with their hardened fists and flying feet? When no self-respecting tough guy bragged of being able to hold another man between his legs under any circumstances? Well thanks to Royce Gracie and the hordes of ground-based grapplers that followed, those days gave way to BJJ belt factories and endless minutes of Speedo-clad butt-scooting, much to the consternation of the casual MMA fan who wanted to see the Dim Mak and other goofball Van Dammisms. For the fans who eschewed the technical nuances of the near guard and the clubbing nature of the ground-n-pound, thankfully, a savior emerged from the Land of the Iron Chefs! Despite years of evidence 'proving' that karate/kickboxing events were surefire losers with the general public, K-1 dared to inject itself into the combat scene, touting the addition of Muay-Thai infighting techniques to the traditional kickboxing formula, bolstered by big name talent and top-rate production. And damned if it didn't work! K-1 kickboxing soon became one of the hottest tickets in town, drawing huge crowds and enviable television ratings before one first heard the whispers of the most feared three-letter word in sports - fix. The specter of fixed matches has always been the kiss of death for my viewership in combat sports, so while K-1 rolled along gathering momentum, I turned up my nose at these 'sports entertainment' events, as I had with RINGS before it. But time passed and cries of fixed matches became fewer in number as the praise for the often spectacular K-1 matches grew in volume and frequency, and my own personal love of boxing and Muay-Thai proved too much for my reservations. And so, with the gentlemanly assistance of Yatsuatari Steve in Japan, I returned to the world of K-1 with a skeptical but unjaundiced eye. Did it live up to the hype? Lets go to the Osaka Dome and find out!

K-1 Millennium Impact! All Roads Lead to Dome!

The show begins with a display of sports entertainment spectacle that rivals anything seen in the WWF, beginning with scintillating pyro and moving through a well-produced intro that climaxes with....Horses in the ring? Well, I'll give them credit for originality at least; when I think of horses, I think of racing, and when Vince McMahon thinks of horses, he thinks about all the needle pockmarks on his ass, but it takes a true visionary to equate horses with combat sports, at least once the Roman Empire collapsed.

Andy Hug vs. Glaube Feitosa

Feitosa hails from Brazil, a real fighter's nation, while Hug can only muster a stodgy Swiss origin, although he can always brag of his country's contributions to the worlds of cheese and novelty Bavarian clocks. Glaube throws a silky front kick that Hug deftly traps under his arm before firing an overhand left that floors the hopping Brazilian. The referee sternly warns Hug,

going so far as to shake a disapproving finger in his face; if this is illegal, then I've lost my best chance at seeing an enziguri used in a real fight. Hug charges in with straight left-right punches as Glaube retreats, punctuated with a spinning backfist that misses spectacularly. Hug closes the distance and both fighters adopt the Muay-Thai pose favored by most dangerous infighters, shoulders up looking to grab a neck vice to immobilize the head. Glaube finds the hold first and rocks Hug backward with a solid kneestrike to the temple. Hug retreats with Glaube close in pursuit, throwing straight lefts and rights (like Vitor Belfort), but missing almost all of them (like Vitor Belfort v Randy Couture). Hug fires back with a strong whip kick and follows up with punches, but Glaube absorbs the shots and fires back with more kneestrikes on the inside. As Hug circles back away, Glaube launches a spectacular round kick that connects violently with the right side of Hug's mug. A flurry of loose hooks also connects, followed by two more kneestrikes to the head as the distance closes! Hug actually has the nerve to crack Glaube's noggin with a crisp right cross after all this, and as the first three-minute round ends, Hug has his opponent trapped on the ropes eating fist. The second round opens with Hug attempting some weird kind of flying poleaxe heel kick out of the corner, which misses but reminds me of Harold Howard's tumbling heel kick from UFC3, and that makes me smile. Hug continues to press during the round, working off his lead right kick to the leg and following with the overhand left. Glaube backpedals furiously and manages to avoid taking any serious damage from Hug, who keeps trying to load up on his big left hand but is unable to connect. Halfway through the round Hug switches to leg kicks and finds more success here, landing a few and forcing the Brazilian to circle away clockwise, rather than the counterclockwise movement preferred by right handed fighters (this dissipates the power in their right hand). Hug attempts another flashy kick, this time a spinning back kick to the body that scores (plus the added bonus for difficulty). Hug continues to press his offense as the round winds down, landing a solid left hook as the bell rings. After getting a verbal thrashing from his cornermen Glaube charges out at the start of round three with a spectacular flying round kick. Unfortunately, Andy Hug chose the exact same moment to let loose with a spinning kick to Glaube's one remaining leg, which takes the Brazilian down. When he gets back up, Hug swarms over him with a barrage of punches only to eat a huge right cross that knocks him back on his heels. It's all Glaube now as the feisty kickboxer launches his most focused assault so far, a barrage totaling more than 20 consecutive unanswered punches and kneestrikes against a rapidly retreating Hug. To his credit, Hug manages to block or deflect most of the punishment and fire back with a nasty series of punches. Hug beckons Glaube to "come on and fight" and the crowd roars its approval as Hug lands another clubbing leg kick just before the bell rings to end the round. Once again inspired by the Portuguese tongue-lashing from his cornermen, Glaube charges out at the start of the new round and unleashes a wild left round kick that lands solidly on Hug's temple. The men trade punches in the center of the ring as the crowd reaches a fever pitch worthy of a five-star All-Japan head-dropper. Hug forces his opponent to a corner with nasty-looking whip kicks to the leg, but Glaube fights back with sharp punches, and blood can be seen trickling down Hug's handsome mug. The referee halts the match to have Hug's wound attended to by the ringside physician, and the slow-motion replay reveals that it was indeed Glaube's initial left kick to the head to start the round that opened Hug up. It's not a large gash though, and fairly high on the head, so the fight restarts in short order. Hug immediately launches his wicked overhand left that scores, followed by a series of strong punches that land frequently; as the round winds

down, Gluabe is having a hard time keeping his hands up to protect his noggin, and Hug takes advantage by following whip kicks with overhand lefts to great effect. The bell finally rings, ending the match as the crowd roars its approval (one presumably intoxicated Japanese fan appears to be 'raising the roof', the comedic value of which cannot be underestimated). The judges rule unanimously for your winner, ANDY HUG!

Francisco Filho vs. Jerome LeBanner

Fihlo enters the ring to the melodic strains of Puffy Combs' "Missing You", which automatically makes me wish for his blood. But he's fighting Jerome LeBanner, a FRENCHMAN - what are the odds that this "cheese-eating surrender monkey" can actually fight? LeBanner is certainly buff though, with the kind of 'WWF Superstar' physique normally associated with injectible vitamin supplements, and enters the ring with a grand sports entertainment entrance - a man wielding a gleaming broadsword walks to the ring ahead of the French Golden Boy, presumably prepared to decapitate any Japanese girls foolish enough to try and jump his boy toy. LeBanner throws the first blow of the fight, a left hook that glances off Filho's shoulder. Seconds later, LeBanner throws another thunderous left hook, this one catching Filho on the left side of his face as his head was turning. This is one of the most dangerous punches in fighting, as it not only rattles the old brain, but also jams the neck. Filho collapses like he was hit with a sniper's bullet and can be seen on the mat, gasping for air like a lungfish as the referee counts to ten. Your winner in spectacular fashion, and avenging years of French cowardice jokes for one night only, JEROME LeBANNER!

Peter Aerts vs. Ray Sefo

Aerts hails from the Netherlands, where the bud is danky and the prostitutes are, well, unhygienic. Sefo represent New Zealand, and I realize that I haven't seen a single Japanese fighter in this sold-out Japanese event! Take THAT Vince Russo! The pre-fight video shows Aerts knocking the winner of the last match, Jerome LeBanner, on his well-toned keester with a left round kick, only to have LeBanner scramble to his feet before the ten count and return the favor with a crushing left hook that ended the fight. LeBanner's hair was nicely frosted at the ends for that video clip, giving him that suave 'toughest dude in the frat' look. Back to the action, this fight starts out with both men reluctant to commit to an offensive assault, making for a few listless opening minutes. The most noteworthy thing to happen in the first round is Sefo's wild spinning backfist that missed by a city block; shoulda studied those old Aja Kong tapes, Ray Ray! Aerts opens the second round with a burst of handstrikes punctuated with a wide leg kick, all of which are deftly blocked. As Sefo prepares to throw a right round kick, Aerts beats him to it with a strong kick to the Sefo's posted leg. Aerts tries to work his offensive game off of his jab, which is always sound strategy on your feet, but he lacks the handspeed and anticipation to pull it off properly. He does catch Sefo trying to charge and lands a kneestrike, but Sefo counters with a short right cross. Aerts spends the rest of the round trying to work his left jab, following up occasionally with nice whip kicks to the leg. Sefo looks fatigued as the bell rings to end the round. The third round starts off in a hurry as Aerts presses forward and lands several punishing whip kicks, but Sefo counters several with well-timed overhand rights. The problem here is that Sefo looks to clearly be in pure defensive mode, waiting to counter and allowing Aerts to dictate the pace and logistics of the fight. Aerts can sense Sefo's timidity and

moves forward with confidence, really hammering in those leg kicks now with little regard for Sefo's counterstrikes. Sefo launches a wide right hook, but Aerts steps out of danger and immediately clinches his opponent and fires off a very painful looking kneestrike to the lower thigh, the kind of focused power strike that can turn the tide of a fight no matter where it lands. Sefo's knees, already shaky, buckle under the assault, and after two more whip kicks to the thigh, Sefo crumbles to the mat. Although he seems to be physically capable of returning to his feet, his heart has been drained by the assault on his left leg. He watches intently as the referee counts to ten. Your winner by knockout, PETER AERTS!

Ernesto Hoost vs. Sam Greco

Another transcontinental battle, with Hoost hailing from the Netherlands and Sam 'Roman' Greco claiming Australian ancestry and willing to pick your pocket to prove it. Hoost boasts the nickname of 'Mr Perfect', which would send Vince McMahon into litigious rage if he only knew that his WWF intellectual property was being defiled by a mere fighter. Hoost looks more like Gary Goodridge than Curt Hennig, but his opening video montage shows him pulverizing our favorite French tough guy, Jerome LeBanner. Greco has the worn, smashed face of a veteran fighter, "fashionably mangled" as one of the old boxing wonks in Miami used to say. Both of these guys look to be in good shape - you won't find guys like Kevin Rozier or Harold Howard in the K-1, which might be a sad thing in some respects, but whatever we lose in comedic value, we gain in match quality. Both men trade single shots in the middle of the ring, not too much lateral movement from either fighter. From his footwork you can tell that Hoost is already loading up on his right hand, and when he throws one that whistles past Greco's cauliflowered ear, you can see superior handspeed attached to Hoost's well-muscled arm. Hoost starts to work a surprisingly crisp left jab halfway through the first round, scoring solidly and snapping Greco's head back. Next Hoost tries to follow up on his jab with a swift right whip kick, and that scores too - Hoost has really shown exceptional stand-up technique at this early stage of the fight, combining good natural abilities (handspeed and balance) with rock-solid striking technique (footwork and timing). Having said that, Greco returns fire with an overhand right after absorbing another of Hoost's powerful leg kicks. Hoost chooses to step back and jab his way clear until the bell rings to end the round. After their minute rest, both men come out of their corners aggressive and eager to trade blows - Greco offers the first flurry, a series of straight punches punctuated with a chopping whip kick, but Hoost gives as good as he gets with short lead punches. As Hoost wades through Greco's leg kicks, it's now Greco who is loading up on his big right hand, and he fires one that glances off Hoost's temple. Hoost flurries and backs Greco to the ropes, then steps back and lands a painful-looking whip kick as the sound of smacking flesh echoes through the crowd. Hoost continues to work the leg as Greco tries to stay out of range and counter with punches. Both men appear fairly unscathed as the bell rings to end round two. Round three starts slowly until Greco lands a good lead whip kick but misses badly on the overhand right haymaker. Hoost pivots and throws a low round kick that Greco catches against his hip, and Hoost introduces Mr Keester to Mr Canvas. Naturally this prompts referee intervention and a restart. Greco catches Hoost off-guard and scores with a ringing whip kick to the leg, and the impact of that blow clearly makes Hoost step back and reassess his situation. Greco senses Hoost's plight and wades in with punches, and Hoost responds in kind, and there's all kinds of deadly fisticuffs being thrown about, with maybe 10% landing with

any significant damage. At the end of the exchange Greco and Hoost land the hardest strikes of the fight so far, a brutal right uppercut to a crouching Hoost countered by an absolutely frightening whip kick that lands square on the lateral portion of Greco's knee. Greco stumbles and his knee gives out just as the round ends. Back in his corner, the ringside physician inspects Greco and determines that he has suffered a knee injury serious enough to force his withdrawal from the match. Hoost celebrates reservedly. Your winner by doctor stoppage. ERNESTO 'MR PERFECT' HOOST!

And that was my first serious exposure to K-1 in several years, and frankly, it kicked no small amount of ass. Sometimes while flipping through cable stations at 3AM on a weekend night (having returned from a night of straight-up mackin', of course), I'd run across karate or kickboxing events on ESPN2 or some other low-end station. Inevitably, as sure as the 'big boot/legdrop' combo, these events would be impossible to watch without powerful stimulants because the fighters threw sissified head kicks, had lousy karatified punching skills, and wore ugly marching band pants. The addition of Muay-Thai techniques, combined with a much better class of athlete and fighter, makes K-1 one of the most exciting forms of combat sport available. I certainly found its action preferable to much of the Pancrase I've seen. The question of match-fixing still lingers in my mind though; some of the exchanges and transfers of match momentum almost seemed 'sports-entertainmentesque' to this fan more accustomed to seeing boxing. Still, I didn't see anything particularly egregious in terms of obvious chicanery in these bouts, and the LeBanner knockout rivaled any haymaker thrown by Tank Abbott, and I don't doubt his legitimacy one bit. So if you happen to pass by a K-1 tape at your local video store while searching for "Pimps Up, Hoes Down", rent 'em both and make a night of it.

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^&^&^&^&^&^ TORYUMON 3/2000 on GAORA TV
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Toryumon is all about wising up and getting on the 1980's Japan Chaos Booking concept bandwagon that has mainly captured the fancy of Chigusa- and that booking concept has propelled GAEA to fabulous heights of popularity and is beginning to do the same for TORYUMON. On my TV anyway. The idea is that you book-end really great matches with super cool MidSouthy angles to get the HEAT~! to a fever pitch- and BOY! is Toryumon all about that- with the THREE pronged stable of FUN FUN FUN! This is all about the new one-third of the glorious stable-mania that has currently gripped God's Favorite Michinoku Pro Replacement.

Yasushi Kanda / Susumu Mochizuki vs. Genki Horiguchi / Ryo Saito:

Yasushi Kanda and Susumu Mochizuki are the unloved loners of TORYUMON and they funnel the lack of love into beating the hell out of folks in the usual totally tricked out Ulitimo Dragon Trainee way- stiffly, freakily, and with undue flourishes. Genki and Ryo are the next big superstars of TORYUMON- Genki is the Toughest Possible Version Of Pauly Shore and Ryo Saito has the possibility of being everything that Mohammed Yone wanted to be. Joined In Progress, this match serves the nasty finishers and a zillion of so nearfalls that spell

P-U-R-O-R-E-S-U, which is actually a shame because in the short time that Ryo Saito has graced the TV screens of Wrestling Fandom Assembled, he has shown that he is far more exciting reversing out of submission holds and being a superfreak on the mat as opposed to kicking out of powerslams, so catching him at the beginning of matches is the primetime for the very promising youngster. He does hit a swanky german Souplex while selling his junk after getting un Fouled there pre-German. He also has a truly mind-busting finishing Submission hold that is sort of mutated BEAST of a submission hold where the sweet and gentle La Majistral had a torrid affair with the robust and manly Romero Special and they had a hellishly preposterous offspring- all of which is broken up by Susumu to set up a very elaborate Kamikaze by Susumu followed by a Savage Flying Elbow by Kanda. Ryo is crushed like a bug and is filled with hate towards the renegades and we are filled with immense joy and anticipation for assorted mindless acts of vengeance and hatred-filled rematches. The postmatch beatdown of all sundry rudo et les Technico is funtabulous in it's scope and in it's beauty of execution- as it takes us to the special place- the place called 80's Japan ANGLEWORLD! I'm PSYCHED!

Yasushi Kanda / Susumu Mochizuki vs. Yoshikazu Taru / MAKOTO (IWRG Tag Team Title Match):

You've seen them beat the fuck out of the good guys, now they get to bludgeon the paste out of the EVIL of TORYUMON. I don't know why they had MAKOTO lose the "loser must leave" match because he is quite the quality sleazy- in- a- workrate- sort- of- way toady. This match had some big flaws that took away from the coolness of the Mochizuki/Kanda lustre. The Susumu Big Move is a fruity combo of a Powerbomb with a roll-off sideways into an Ace Crusher and it looks a whole lot like a good midgrade Side Rolling Lucha Armdrag gone awry- as opposed to a legitimate finisher, yet they base huge transitions of the match on this- first as a single finisher and then as an elaborate Tagteam finisher. I dunno, the whole second half of the match is a steady stream of goofy finishers being kicked out of. The best part of the match is Taru and Kanda as they set up Kanda's big foray into offense and then Taru looked effective beating the hell out of Kanda- thus making it look like Taru is holding up his end so when they finally break Makoto's tiny head and win the belts, Taru looks justified in dissing vampire boy in an old style rudo way. Either way, quite in the middle of all wrestling.

Cima / Sumo Fuji vs. Masaaki Mochizuki / Chocoball Kobe:

Okay, I'm trying to figure out why people are not worshipping at the feet of SUWA because he once again is the most dangerous and intense thing in a match that he's not actually in- and it's not like the Varsity isn't right there- as CIMA is in total Fabulous Cock mode, plowing over everything in his surly wake on his way independent Junior Heavyweight Iconhood. And Chocoball Kobe is also establishing his place as Ass Kick Freak Of The New Millenium- making with the bludgeoning and punching and the kicking and hurting and bleeding and the punching and the hey hey hey! BUT THE BEST PART is Suma Fuji DANDY! He isn't afraid to fucking lean into Masaaki kicking him right into the motherfucking face. I don't know why people are down on Dandy Fuji Sumo because he is not afraid to be able to sell anything and WILL take the ass-beating neccessary to make Masaaki Mochizuki look like the credible Ass-Kicker- and THAT makes Sumo Fuji better than Koji Kanemoto when comparing mutual matches. CIMA is fucking ELECTRIC as he simultaneously makes young Kobe look effective and dangerous with

his stiff kicks and at the same time gets himself over as the biggest dick in ALLLLLLLLLLL of Japan by looking like the surly cocksucker shithhead that we all love and adore. The point of the match is that Masaaki Mochizuki beats the hell out of either rudo so both rudo try to isolate Masaaki and allow Chocoball to absorb the monstrous beating that he has shown that he can absorb. The pinnacle of this isolation of Mochizuki is when SUWA comes out dressed in his CRAZY MAX dress clothes and proceeds to beat the everliving hell out of Mochizuki to allow CIMA and Dandy to maul Chocoball into a lifeless lump. Sumo wins with his crappy Nodawa and postmatch SUWA loses what's left of his rudo brainstem and screams into the mike and Pedrigree's Mochizuki in a mixing of complex booking signals. (Is UD shooting for Testosterone GAEA or a tinier version of the WWF?) Of course, the third stable is straight out of Lucha- but the Mochizukus+Kanda would have to be American or Puerto Rican for this to be truly Lucan Libre outsider stable fodder. Anyway, this match is pretty minor but fun because of the CIMA, Mochizuki and SUWA and everybody else being man enough to take an ass-kicking. And Cima wears a disturbing hat during the post-beatdown STICK~!fest. It's like samurai haircut but it's a hat. There you go.

Yoshikazu Taru vs. Stalker Ichikawa:

This is horrendous. Stoker is a freak that has not progressed into anything. He's the same bad jokes and shitty actual wrestling spots. Being skinny, sexually ambivalent and the Puroresu equivalent of the Gallagher is no way to go through life. Stalker is all about the Ontological Argument for Tsubo Genjin but that doesn't excuse the listless comedy spots that get less chuckles than an episode of Laverne and Shirley after they moved to California and it was the 60's but everyboby had late seventies hair styles and it sucked. It also doesn't excuse the stupid booking that has Taru selling giant wads of Stoker's offence- which is by it's nature via his gimmick- is supposed to be totally ineffectual. Stoker pokes him in the butt AGAIN and Taru sells his toprope Tony Atlas Double chop and they do this whole thing where Stoker walks the ropes backwards while Taru is hypnotized or something. this is so very much in the realm of the Great Lost Shitty Match Of The Nineties- Shinzaki vs Magic Man- where Japan Indie also reached this GLOW level of TV brain-stunning stupidity as Magic Man hypnotized Shinzaki and Shinzaki fell asleep. Or maybe that was me. And there was this other match where Yone Genjin had a snowball fight with Alexander Otsuka- the same Otsuka that had a 43 star match with Diasuke Ikeda where Ikeda did the snot-releasingly-funny Space Flying Tiger Drop. Either way, Taru puts on a bunch of winter clothes and one of those official Fugazi knit cap and pins Stoker by pretending to ski jump- which sums up this match. Na attempt to be surreal but instead.....Very bad! Very Very Bad.

Cima / Sumo Fuji / Judo Suwa vs. Magnum Tokyo / Genki Horiguchi / Yoshiyuki Saito:

Judo Suwa is back and GOD does he rule it in this. Suwa has deeply eaten his way out of legit Juniordom, looking more like a New Japan Heavyweight than a Ultimo trainee (and not just because he has comical airbrushed long pants), but somehow- by becoming a lardy heavyweight- he has become more agile and more adept at being the best motherfucking rudo in Japan. WATCH! as he makes Genki Horiguchi look absolutely STELLAR as Genki is Togoed by SUWA like Discovery/Luxor/Venum in 1995 would be Togoed by Marabunta. SEE! the fatness of his face-smashing high-impact offense that suddenly looks cooler with a much fatter

ass behind it all. Suwa is bedecked with the cool dreads and has a real intensity that other wrestlers on every continent try to fake through charisma and roid-rage and chairshots and SHOOT~! PROMOS~! and other bullshit that can't hold up to the true psychotic intensity of the likes of Benoit, Finlay or Diasuke Ikeda- and SUWA is SOOOOO looking like a budding great one who could join those ranks one fine day. Cima is gonna be a more popular wrestler because he has the smirk and dickish tactics and he IS true superworker, but Suwa is the one I'm gonna keep an eye on when it comes to seeing who has potential to transcend the basic tenets of Junior Heavyweight Wrestling and be a hardcore freak who will become a joy forever. Meanwhile, Yoshiyuki Saito is the most formalistic reconstructionist of the Famous Ultimo Dragon Style of melding the athleticism of Lucha Libre with the athleticism of Puroresu- as he does all the goofy and elaborate things that ONLY Ultimo Dragon can get away- especially the idea of basing any of your offensive repertoire on fricking headstands. I can see where Saito gets the handstand spots- but you HAVE to be as cool and astoundingly well-rounded as fucking Ultimo Dragon to pull something as implausible and stupid as headstands and not come off looking like the more limber, de-boned Yone Genjin. Either way, Yoshiyuki Saito is a fine little worker and God knows he will take a manly ass-beating, but Ryo Saito- the Saito that I'm far more drawn to- has already smoked him on the mat and in the air and in the innate coolness in the ring department, so uppercard job-boy isn't such a hideous fate for the lesser Saito when you think about it. Sumo Fuji Dandy 2000 falls through the cracks of the junior glitz and glamour of the wonderous wonderous TORYUMON- which is a shame because he is quite solid in this and is pretty solid in every match he is in- being the DREAM Jim the Anvil Niedhart by using a rudimentary and half-assed power offense to counteract the state of the art everything around him- but that doesn't stop him from doing elaborate goofball matwork with Saito and making the little punk look nifty and stuff. BUT YA KNOW, the man who has disappeared or has become invisible with all the GAEAism and rising of the new breed and maturation of Cima and Suwa as workers and evry other thing going on around him is MAGnum Tokyo- who is still there being the superworker amidst a sudden sea of superworkers. The fact that he has stepped aside from the spotlight to allow others to have their moment shouldn't take away from the fact that he is Tiny-Pants-Bedecked And Ready To Be The Best Worker In Any Given Match. But not this match. Here, it is basically a total Rudo/Technico reversal where the technicos were basically there to work their asses off to make the Rudos look good at the end (though the sweet sweet rudo turns by Suwa with Horiguchi were not to be sniffed in a formal Lucha sense, because they were elaborate and near flawless before a blown spot throws one off the scent.) I figured Saito would get beaten to death but he is the only technico that gets in any memorable offense with a couple nifty springboard dropkicks and a nice run-up-the-ropes Sunset Flip. But Magnum and Horiguchi were there to make Suwa and Cima look Bad Ass- and it worked. The ending isn't as rote as these matches have become- as there isn't a thousand nearfalls and a thousand saves that keep going until your eyes glaze over right before the dramatical ending, so this wasn't bad at all but It was kinda minor in the whole TORYUMON spectrum. Suwa makes it fun enough to to watch amd Cima and Magnum have residual magic to burn but they do make it as residual as you'll ever be comfortable with. The postmatch beatdown and yelling takes 2 minutes and 26 seconds.

It's TORYUMON so you want all of it, but if you have to pick between this and other TORYUMON or BattlARTS or something, you can always get this later. It's THAT toryuaverage.

~!~

Best of Fallen Angel Christopher Daniels Comp
(PHIL SCHNEIDER)

Chris Daniels is probably my favorite Indy guy to watch. His movements are really fluid and he is really good at working elaborate counter sequences, he also has a boss gimmick and can talk. He has been in all three major promotions and all three have misused him. He is currently languishing under WCW contract all though he is not being used (which is a fucking blessing, I would much rather have to get tape to see Modest / Daniels v. West Side Playaz, then watch Vince Russo turn him into Chris P. Neis or Emerald San Antonio Daniels.) I got a big 8 hour tape of Angel matches and I dug into it with gusto.

Christopher Daniels vs. Steve Boz (Windy City Wrestling 12/8/98)

This is for some sort of Windy City title. Boz is a member of Devastation (apparently unincorporated, I don't see Skandor Akbar anywhere) and has one of the more spectacular wrestling mullets I have ever seen. We are talking Cole twins level here. The match itself is pretty good, as these guys go back aways and are both nice workers. Boz has a kicky offense, and is sort of hit and miss as far as stiffness, but they look pretty good, especially the Ulitmo kick combo. The coolest spot of the match was early as Daniels tried to go for an armdrag and Boz sat down into an armbar which looked like it wrenched the shit out of Daniel's shoulder. The had a huge run-in daisychain as 64 guys from the back come in after the contrived ref bump, and Boz ends up retaining the title with a second rope superstunner. Good until the end, and that didn't even bug me that much. Boz is a keeper, as he seems pretty polished and has the hair that says PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING!!

Christopher Daniels vs. El Mosco de Merced (ECW HH Chicago, IL 6/17/99)

This is the lost opportunities dream match, as poster boy for Big Bear fetishists everywhere- Paul Heyman- had both of these guys available to use and let them slip away preferring to use talents like NOVA, Chris Chetti and Jack Victory. Nothing match as Daniels squashed Merced and rips off his mask, bringing out an angry Super Crazy bent on getting revenge for Lucha Libre or something.

Christopher Daniels vs. Super Crazy (ECW HH Chicago, IL 6/17/99)

This started slow, as both guys felt obliged to do some ECW style brawling, which ain't there strong point, before they got all Lucha on that ass. The last 8 minutes or so were great, with some neat in-ring flying by Crazy and some wild ass counters by Daniels, including a backlide attempt reversal into the Angel Wings. The end part had a thousand near falls, and ended with a russian legsweep into a cradle pin, which was really elaborate looking, and was something I hadn't seen before. Good match, which stands up well to the Tajiri v. Super Crazy series. I

would have liked to see Daniels v. Tajiri or Guido, but someone has to pay Tommy Dreamer's Denny's bills, so I guess they didn't have the cash.

Christopher Daniels (pre Fallen Angel gimmick) vs Steven Boz (Light Heavyweight Championship-Windy City)

This is an early Daniels match, before the Fallen Angel gimmick (probably around 1994) and Daniels had a quasi mullet and a pair of early-90's Scotty Steiner trunks. Boz is still sporting his 1991 Shawn Michaels hockey hair. This was a fun Nitro match, as it went about 4 minutes with Daniels hitting some nice moves including a hipbuster elbow, a press slam into a snakeeyes and a slingshot backsuplex, Boz hits some of his kicks and then Daniels hits him with some brass knuckles. Not particularly great, but was kind of fun.

The Fallen Angel (w/Brett Sanders) vs Mike Anthony (Windy City Wrestling)

Mike Anthony is not Tigre Canadianese but a stumpy looking dude who looks like Danny Kroffat after a six day Poutine binge. Daniels started the match wearing a mask, although he was announced as Chris Daniels. Anthony sucks nuts, and most of this match consists of Daniels bumping huge for him, including taking the Helmsly bump over the turnbuckle, and taking a nasty post bump. Angel must have held a belt or something, because he just allowed himself to get counted out. Angel was quite the corn fed midwest Psicosis in this, but Anthony was a batch of nothing.

TAKA Michinoku vs. Fallen Angel

This match is inexcusably introed by the Honkytonk man. These two decided to have themselves a wrestling match on Shotgun. Angel takes control early hitting a headscissors, fat springboard plancha and a Angel's Wings. He then takes a big Jerry bump and TAKA hits a second rope Orihara moonsault. Daniels Takes control again with a top rope rana. TAKA attempts the Michinoku Driver which Angel blocks, but TAKA flips out of a backdrop and hits the Driver. Good short match with TAKA giving Angel a ton of offense.

Chris Daniels vs. Taka Michinoku (WWF SSN 9/19/98)

Damn good match which was longer and better than their previous match. They started with some quick Lucha exchanges and Daniels sends TAKA outside but misses a springboard splash hitting the guardrail (which was actually a nice bit of psychology as he hit the move in their last match.) TAKA takes over hitting a spinning DDT, but Daniels counters the second with poweslam (which was another bunch of psych for a freaking WWF Syndie squash, TAKA is the shit). Daniels hits a swank ass slingshot jackhammer, and hits an Angel's Wings out of a series of pin reversals, TAKA tries for a Michinoku Driver which Daniels reverses into a cradle, but TAKA hits the second for the pin. Just an awesome match, possibly the best syndicated match I have ever seen the WWF do, and it matches the best Worldwide matches ever. Very competitive, tons of psychology, the only drawback was the horrible announcing of the herpes sore of the hooker's vagina of wrestler Vince Russo who spent the entire match talking about New York sports teams, Russo may actually be a worse announcer than he is a booker. All told this match was quite the hidden Sports Entertainment gem.

Chris Daniels vs. Venum Black (PCW):

Really disappointing match, the last time I saw Venum he was at the cutting edge of young highflying Mexican technicos, I was really looking forward to seeing him in the U.S. against Daniels, as this would be his big chance to impress a U.S. audience. I don't know whether it was injuries or lethargy or just an off night, but he looked like crap here, and this was one of the worst matches on the show. They started with some crisp mat wrestling which was nice, but once they got off the mat it fell apart. Venum didn't do any dives, and his only highspots were are twisting Agulia style springboard headscissors (which he slipped on), the goofy Sabu make-my-opponent- hold-the ropes-like-a- doof legdrop, and a contrived double jump skytwister, which he would have missed even if Daniels hadn't moved, Daniel's put on the Last Rights and Venum turned wrong and fucked the move. Bad short match, and Venum was a complete waste of plane fair for PCW.

Togo/Funaki vs. Steve Boz/Fallen Angel

Boz is of course sporting the roadie for Alabama level Mullet, and Kaientai has the crappy Heavy metal wear. Boz starts with a nice spin kick and a dope sliding dropkick. Angel comes in and hits an exploder and a lionsault, before Kaientai took over. Togo was house rocking with a double choke suplex and Hardy style and Togo style senton bombs. Good match although it was pretty short.

Christopher Daniels vs. Jeff Peterson

These two flow together really well as Daniels proves his mettle as a world class rudo by making the green, spotty Peterson look muthafuckin great. Jeff has a bunch of fancy spots including a Yakashiji baseball slide, springboard tope-con-hilo and a quebrada turned into an armdrag, but Daniels is the glue, moving really smoothly and leading the complex counter sequences which make this match so cool. He also does his coolest finisher a firemans carry into the last rites. It is easy to have a good match with a good wrestler, but taking flawed wrestlers and pulling a great match out of them is how you separate the good from the great, and this match is proof that Daniels can do that.

Christopher Daniels vs. Mike Modest

One of the best American indy matches of the 90's and a incredibly complex match which melded New Japan Juniors style work with All Japan level suplexes in a match which compares favorably with the best of the Malenko /

Guerrero series. Like Dean Malenko, Danny Kroffat and Chiyako Nagashima, Daniels is great at constructing layered counter sequences, and Modest brings his bumping, psychology and array of suplexes to the table. The mat wrestling at the beginning was very quick and mixed lucha and U.S. prostyle, especially nice was a Daniels headscissors into a cradle. They moved into an exchange of highimpact moves, including a pair of modified Daniels moonsaults and an Angels Wings and a brutal Dragon Suplex and Exploder by Modest. They then moved into the extended finish when each man worked counters on the others big moves, (my favorite being Daniels countering a running DVD attempt into a Last Rights attempt which Modest conuntered into a stretch plum rollup.) They then did a bunch of great pin reversals and roll ups which climaxed

with Modest getting a reversal of a La Magistral for the win. Just a great match with very few flaws, really lives up to the best of 1999 and is the best match I have seen either man in.

Chris Daniels vs. Ace Darling vs. Devon Storm 3-Way Dance (ISPW)

This was shot in Cruise Ship HH, and was pretty difficult to follow (I think I am spoiled by seeing so many Tim Noel and Bob Barnett HH, those two are Kurasawa and Scorsese and who ever shot this was Renny Harlin.) They do a coin flip and Daniels and Storm start the match, some pretty decent mat wrestling and some basic U.S. Indy Juniors stuff (headscissors, pescadas, falcon arrows you know the drill) When Darling comes in the do some basic three way spots, with the best being Daniels delivering a neckbreaker on Storm while simultaneously DDTing Darling (which Daniels stole from Nova, along with the Last Rites, the Angels Wings, the dropkick and his entire existance as an entity, Daniels, like all of us all only exist because of the loving compassion of the all knowing Novs. ALL HAIL NOVA!!) . Daniels gets eliminated first by a Darling crossbodyblock, and Darling and Storm have match 678 of their uneventful Best of 2945 series. Match was good, but not super or anything.

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%^^%^%^^^ Rippa Reviews Some of the Decade's Best Matches
(PHIL RIPPA)

As I have been rewatching tapes for each ballot, I have come across matches that haven't been reviewed yet. And since I was going to review them for the web site, I might as well add them to the DVDVR. Now, if I can just get the other guys to review some of the matches... and write some bios.

Shawn Michaels vs. Mankind - WWF Mind Games (9/22/96)

Having only seen clips of this match, I followed the rules and didn't vote for it. Now, I have seen it and can say that I would have voted for it if the ballot were conducted today. This is another match that falls under the category of Does A Stupid, Crappy, Overbooked Ending Ruin a Great Match (see also Hell in a Cell 1). IIRC, Foley called this his favorite match of all time or at least one of his top three. The opening is really hot as Mankind hits the Cactus clothesline while Michaels backdrops Mankind onto the concrete and then hits a tope. Michaels takes over, including teasing Sweet Chin Music in the first three minutes. I know many people complain about this match saying that Foley didn't get much offense in. I think he gets plenty. It is just that we remember Foley jabbing the pencil into his leg more than anything else (which is one of my favorite parts of the match). Michaels takes his share of bumps - the backdrop to the floor and the suplex through the table. The best sequence of the match is the backdrop to the floor, followed by the Hip Buster off the turnbuckle and then a swinging neckbreaker to the floor. Now after 25 minutes of really great action, the bottom drops out. After destroying the Spanish announce table, Vince McMahon uncharacteristically leaves his announce position to "check" on both men. So you know the ending is coming up. After they both get back in the ring, Vader runs in to cause the DQ, which in turn brings out Sid. Sid proceeds to throw possibly the worst punches of his career and remember this is Sid we are talking about. THEN, the Undertaker

pops out of the casket at ringside to add to the merriment. Ending really blows chunks and is quite possibly worse than Kane ripping the door of the cage. The rest of the match is really great. I guess since this was the show that kicked off the ECW/WWF angle, McMahon decided to do an homage to Heyman booking.

Dude Love vs. Steve Austin - WWF Over The Edge (5/31/98)

I finally found a Blockbuster that had a decent supply of wrestling tapes so now I can catch up and some of the WWF cards that I refused to purchase a few years ago. Since this was at the height of the WWF delivering really crappy PPVs except for the main events, I ain't crying a river over waiting two plus years to see this. (Granted, the Bradshaw/Taka vs. Kaientai match was fun but you get my point.) Anyway, Austin hates McMahon. McMahon hates Austin. Love is the corporate sock puppet. The entertainment or "story" part of this match far outweighs the actual wrestling part of the match, but they do such a good job with the story part that the match is still great. Pat Paterson's long-winded intros and Gerald Brisco never letting go of the timekeeper's hammer even after getting wiped out are really priceless. Quick side tangent - I never really liked the Dude Love character. Partly because there were no edgy Cactus Jackesque promos (which could be said about his entire WWF tenure) but mainly because Dude Love was the most wrestlingcentric of all of Mick Foley's characters. Moreover, despite the fact that Mick is one of my all-time favorites, he is about 279th on the list of wrestlers who I want to see taking it to the mat. Back to the match. Foley takes an insane bump as he lands on his neck and head after Austin clotheslines him off the ringside barrier. Sometimes, the simplest bumps are the nastiest. The match kinda drags as they brawl out to the mock demolition car set. Both guys are out of gas (which Foley admits in his book) so there is many an awkward moment as the participants decide who is to do what - like the Hip Buster off the car was a nice idea in theory. The crowd was pretty rabid for the entire match, which definitely added to the aura. Austin bleeds a bunch to make the vampires happy (Hey! That's me!) Brisco and Paterson continue to show what pros they are by taking freaked out chokeslams through each announce table. The chair shot to McMahon was pretty vicious too. The "how would Austin overcome the odds" story was really neat as they built from the Undertaker's "surprise" appearance to Austin counting his own pinfall. I think I voted this match 12th on my list but I think I would knock it down a few now - especially since I have finally seen that Michaels/Mankind match. Still a must see as it is a high point in the McMahon/Austin feud.

Next issue, I will get to a couple of ECW matches, including that pesky 4-way.

~!~

WEST JAPAN PRO 11/27/1999
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

The L'Enfant Terrible of the lowdown dirty business of finding the coolest, most obscure shit to ever come out of Japan - Scott Mailman- sent me this in exchange for THE JOSHI ADDICTION TAPE that I made for him, since he wanted to get addicted to Joshi and both of the Dreamslams didn't get him hooked somehow. I took a different route to get the Joshi monkey on his back-

concentrating on the Ass-beating Realm of Joshi that is prevalent, exhilarating and ALMOST ALWAYS overlooked when groups of young people get together to talk about the actual professional wrestling. I have no fucking idea where he got this. There is no matchlist anywhere, there is no mention of it on at the Japan Wrestling, it isn't even on frickin' Picksi's result site. It seems the DVDVR Message Board crashed just in time because I didn't have Mailman's website address anywhere so my slim hope that he had somehow gotten a matchlist for this are dashed on the cyber rocks of the virtual shore as fate has a hearty laugh at my expense. Thus I'm relying on my battered memory and wiley cunning as I will review this in realtime- thus the spelling will be horrendous and the sentences will be baffling in their cretinousness. Add to the fact that my wife is asleep and I'm listening to mp3's en lieu of listening to the 120 people in attendance cheer for Nise Viscera or whatever pops up will add to the allure. It'll be annoying and stream-of-consciousness like a William Faulkner Novel! Or James Joyce even!

Start time 12:22, 06/15/2000:

I rewind and watch the monkey episode of the Simpsons. the VQ is fgood and the HH is all bright and it's a high school gym. I've turned off the mp3's because I'm wild anmd shit. YANNI YAKUSO vs Chin-she: fuck, It sounded like that. I don't know who either of these guys are One guy looks like Hase but with a yellow shortleeve sweatshirt. the other guy is going for that scum of BattlARTs pseudo indie look. Grace is your ref and she is qwuite the hotty but she is also deeply in need of a sammich. The greatest: three minutes iun and they are takingt it to the mat and all you can actually keep your attention on is the children in the back playing with balloons. teen boys also talk amongst themselves, possibly gathering courage to chat up female classmates standing against the gym wall. The matwork gets superlistless as sweatshirt boy goes for a roll-up. The one child bonks the balloon off the others stomach and it's all charming and endearing. Sweatshirt boy works on the arn of shootstyle guy and there is some sort of selling. Grace looks to be trying to stay out of the way in case one of these guys sloppily takes out her knee or something. Sweat shirt guy starts no-selling everything and suddenly I need a ballon myself, possibly filled with lithium. the teens are now in two clumps- grouped by gebder and they are less than one foot apart. Could a kiss be stolen over crazy bread at the pizza hangout? Grace kicks into gear for the merciful finish as- ah fuck- somebody goit a Boston Crab and it's all over. They cut quickly and Grace is still in the ring, looking alluring and overly thin, The music is generic Japanese pop. The one guy has blond hair and is goig for the eternal indie everywhere look of hard rock hipster doofus. HOLY FUCK BIO-FRANKEN enters the building. He l;umbers slowly and his movement are very akin to the movements of a creature pieced together from assorted human corpses. The whole point of the Frankenstein books was a study of if man would gain a soul simply by gaining life. Does God create and soul or does any living thing deemed a human have a soul? Does the empathy of the Frankenstein Monster indicate the existence of a soul. It sounds very Calvinist when you think abnout it. The great thing about BIO FRANKEN is that he seems to have been pieced together from corpses that were pulled from a burning car on the way home from a Jimmy Buffet concert because he is wearing Dockers pants and a Hawaiian shirt. BIO-FRANKEN is more than just a Frankenstein mask, he also moves stiffly like Frankenstein. It's quite charming. He definately sucks as a wrestler, but who's counting, BIO takes to the top ropes but Hard Rock boy hits a toprope

Diamond Cutter into a German Suplex, that BIO ingeniously takes like Frankenstein. (BABY CRYING. there will be no ending FOR YOU.)

The next match is AWWWWWESOME so far. this guy with a stretchy outfit and bug mask takes on- WAIT it sounds like:

Kaorubaoru vs spimmy yabha: Grace touches the indie freaks and HOLD ON! the bug msk guy is sporting a Micheal Bolton-level mullet and a hideous Anjo 1995 style stripy outfit. The other guy looks like Mark Rothko painting with antennae- a strange mutation of Stoker Ichikawa and an Abstract-Expressionist painting processed through black and white minimalism. The antennae guy is all about the comedy headbutts, Anjo Mullet is all about the basic wrestling and this is quite the second match on a West Japan card. Stoker Rothko hits the fun-filled double dropkick foule into the corner sd this shambles along. Grace palys along with the comedy antics and I'm trying to figure out if that is his real hair or if it is another in a long line of cool Japanese masks with fake hair attached. Either way we win. He has used a chair and it has become a W*ING undercard affair and - cool it's over. Nice outfits. Thoroughly unremarkable wrestling.

HEY! I think this is that Nice Terry Funk guy . he is wearing a Cowboy hat and he's coming out to some late period Aerosmith. His opponent is JAKKKED up on sweet Anabolic Steroids, It sounds like Luke Geeee-heeee-hooo. This isn't Nise Terry Funk this is just a Japanese guy in a cowboy hat, they work out of the headlock which I'm all for. They go all the way to the verticle base. Roid Boy does a powerslam and throws on a chinlock like Davey Boy Smith at his most lazy and useless. The Man Who would be Funk hits an knee lift and I'm now certain that I am watching Mid-Atlantic gone horribly wrong. This isn't...uh.....good. They brawl about on the outside and they EXPOSE THE BUSINESS~! with HORRENDOUS table spots. Roid boy is all about the powerslams. The teens are gone, off to drive fast in their cars and listen to that damn rock and roll music that those kids like to play. This match is horrendous, Grace is trying to make it work and at least she is always on the other side of the picture screen. Movements without rhyme or reason- this match is an allegory for our lives- Do you in your life, truly work on one metaphysical body part and try to make every action interrelate to every other action? Of course not, life is life and wrestling is art. Wrestling adds structure that life doesn't have- thus when you watch shitty wrestling like this where both participants are simply doing actions unrelated to any general cause or idea of hierarchial planning, you should say- this isn't ART, this is a shitty wrestling match. And it was,

Grace never leaves your screen. Children with flowers come to the ring.

Basarah is in the ring and he still hasn't shaved his mask. His two partners look vaguely familiar. HEY! HEY ASIAN motherfucking COUGAR! Everyone if stoked and throwing streamers. The camera is now 500 feet away so I can't figure out who the other four are. Apres introductions and closer camera angle, they are even less familiar. Basarah takes it to the mat. There is this big muscle guy on Cougar's side who wrestles like Scott norton, as I see that drug testing is not a local ordinance in the priovince of West Japan. he does do a nice Angelo Mosca

jumping double foot eye-rake. Cougar enter and I await the leg drops. instead he tries to go all inring lucha and the chump he's in with is as to how to seellit. He sure as hell knows how to sell the over-the-top-rope Legdrop and does the rarelky seen FULL 360 upon impact. THAT'S fucking SWANK. Basarah's side does some of the worst triple teams you will ever see and it's endearing in a way. Basarah and LummoX Boy do the New Japan battle of Lariats. A guy in biker pants hits a nice dropkick on said LummoX boy. Asian Cougar brings the cool ass legdrops and is elevating this match to Fucked Up Indie Classic Level. The shmoes in the ring are trying to step it up so as to not get totally smoked and are only half-blowing everything they do. there is this tall guy on Basarah's side who is a lot like Sam houston in looseness and very bad punches and lankiness, he and LummoX Boy actually BRAWL LIKE Motherfuckers outside with LummoX Boy taking a SWANK flying bump into the chairs and they do two suplexes to the floor that look all out of control and you can SMELL the shoulders seperating all leading up to ASIAN COUGAR doing the giant plancha to the floor. Samo Houstonoooo and LummoX take their vengence to the ring and Sam hits a GREAT German Suplex. LummoX counters with a quite credible Powerslam and follows up with two ASTOUNDINGLY sloppy powerbombs to get the pin. This was great! Asian Cougar fucking rules. He smoked the local shmoes like expensive cigars since they tried to hang in the same universe and came close and didn't thoroughly embarrass themselves. A million Billion stars on the Obscure Japanese indie scale.

Asian Cougar and Bio Franken make this quite a jewel of an 80 per cent unwatchable card.

End time: 1:39 06/15/2000

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!@!@!@!@!@ AJW Arashi no Kaisen Zenjo vs. LLPW - Commercial Tape 1/24/93
(PHIL RIPPA!)

Dean got this tape from young Lorefice and passed it on to me. Since I was in a joshi mood after working on the ballot, I stuffed this in the VCR and was very glad that I did.

Rie Tamada/Sachiko Nakamura vs. Chikako Hasegawa/Masami Watanabe
Watanabe, who looks like Chaparrita ASARI at age 12, shows her support for her Canadian sisters by wearing the giant maple leaf insignia tights. Nothing of note from this match. Everyone's MOVE SET! consists of flying cross bodies, arm drags and hair pulls. Move along, nothing to see here.

Tomezo Tsunokake vs. Mr. Buddhaman

I can't give you a good reason why they stuck a midget match on the card but they did. I fast forward until the midget with the Afro wanders out. The beauty of it all is that the midget's fro is bigger than he is. It's like that episode of the Simpsons where the Pep Boys come to life and have to push their heads around in shopping carts.

Saemi Numata vs. Bat Yoshinaga

No where near as bad as I thought it was going to be, mainly because Bat isn't afraid to kick your ass. The Kapo Kick she uses to win is down right nasty. Next, Bat needs to go kick the ass of whoever cut her hair.

Suzuka Minami vs. Yumiko Hotta

Now the real fun begins. As is to be expected, Hotta brings the kicks and both ladies bring the wrestling. The match follows along the lines of Minami working over Hotta's bad knee (that would be the one with the bandage on it).

Hotta sells it well and it's all psychological and shit. The one flaw is that when they get to the near fall section (which was all dramatic and shit), Hotta has to forgo selling the leg in favor of the big spots. We go BROADWAY! which was disappointing. Points are quickly earned in the post-match interview as Minami holds her head in about five different places during the course of her debriefing.

Debbie Malenko/ Sakie Hasegawa vs. Terri Power/ Kaoru Ito:

I can't escape the whores of the WWF no matter which tape I put in. I am kinda juiced as this is the first time I have ever seen Debbie Malenko. I am completely floored by her huge homage to Johnny Ace femullet. Power is not nearly as worthless as she is now but she is still Lugerese with her comically bad clotheslines, business exposing punches and bad hair. (Granted, Luger never tried a pescada but if he did I'm sure it would look exactly like Power's "I took third place in the belly flop competition at fat camp" attempt.) Surprising no one, the best sections of the match do not involve her. Hasegawa and Ito tear it up while Debbie is possibly the flashiest person to lift the Malenko name. She even follows Malenko rule #14 - Must do Northern Light Suplex with bridge out of knuckle lock. Ito goes footstomp crazy on Hasegawa hitting about a million of them including one on Hasegawa's side. That ain't good for the rib cage. She also did a footstomp off of Power's shoulders. Ito wasn't afraid to over-rotate on everything, nearly beheading herself as she was on the receiving end of a top rope bulldog. Malenko wins with a top rope belly to belly and immediately moves into my list of "people I need to see more off". Ironically, Joe Malenko is also on that list.

Kyoko Inoue vs. Takako Inoue

I wasn't as into this match as much as I probably should have been but it was still a fine batch of wrestling. I am not a huge Kyoko Inoue fan probably because I have watched her career in reverse. I have seen a big batch of her size 16 days and now I am trying to catch up on her size 10 days. The match pretty much has two distinct parts. The first part is both Inoues just slapping on submissions without any rhyme or reason. "Hey, I think I will try this Boston Crab now." The second part is the good part as they tease an upset Takako win as Takako damn near kills Kyoko with a couple of suplexes on the floor. Kyoko staggers back into the ring at 19 3/4 to avoid the countout and the crowd is all into it. Takako gets several near falls but can't put Kyoko away. Eventually, Kyoko obliterates Takao with a Niagra Driver. Takako manages to avoid the TKO but she is so out of it that Kyoko just slaps her back down and pins her. That was kinda neat as opposed to doing the "someone who was knocked out suddenly hulks up for another 10 minutes" finish.

Toshiyo Yamada/ Manami Toyota vs. Aja Kong/ Bull Nakano

When I saw this match on the list for this tape, it sold me on reviewing this. I mean Aja, Bull and Yamada. Yes Please! Guess what? This was really great and really stiff. In the first 30 seconds, everyone but Aja has either been dropped on their head or smacked in the face. I think there was a pool in the back over whose jaw would be shattered first. Fast paced all action match with a neat little story line. Aja plays the unstoppable monster as almost nothing effects her the entire match and she unleashes her fury on anything that moves. So that means Bull takes the brunt of the Yamada/Toyota attack. Of course, Bull isn't a slouch either as she hands out a big ass kicking while taking one herself. (Quick Side Story: Another reason why my wife to be rules: At the start of the match, Molly saw Bull's hair for the first time. This led to a five minute conversation over whether or not she could get her hair like that. The final conclusion was that Bull's hair is finer making it easier to stay like that and today's hair sprays would not hold up as well as the industrial strength environmental killers that Bull was using.) You know that spot where one person bridges out of a test of strength, then the other person tries to break the bridge by jumping on their stomach? Bull and Aja figure out the greatest solution to this problem. Bull stands on your hands and Aja jumps on your stomach. Greatest counter ever. Whole bunch of great action including Aja doing the out of control plancha which Kyoko Inoue ends up taking the worst of. The finishing sequence is all sorts of great. Aja accidentally hits Bull with the uraken. So not only does Bull have to fight off the double teams of Yamada and Toyota she has to shake off the effects of own partner's finisher. Bull battles back and, in a move that I know many will be happy about, destroys Toyota with the guillotine leg drop. Yamada makes the save but Aja eliminates her so Bull then hits the moonsault to get the pinfall. Aja gives a stoic interview after the match and all is right with the world.

Akira Hokuto/ Etsuko Mita/ Mima Shimoda (AJW) vs. Eagle Sawai/ Miki Handa/ Harley Saito (LLPW):

Phil makes a statement that is probably, completely, factually wrong: I think this the start of the AJW vs. LLPW feud. Granted the rivalry was there but I think this six-man jump started the whole thing. This match is amazingly great as the wrestling is great, the story is great and the heat is great. The LLPW team is absolutely loathed by the crowd with young Harley earning most of their scorn. I am also stunned by the somewhat svelte Eagle Sawai. Will wonders never cease? Both teams are ready to tear into each other with Shimoda playing the role of insane out of control partner who needs to be reigned in by her teammates. The AJW team busts out ever bitchish hell move they know and the crowd eats it all up. They also do the Kaientai pose with Hokuto playing the role of Dick Togo. Of course, Togo didn't flip off all his opponents while doing the pose. Saito is the LLPW captain and she wants to deal only with Hokuto. So she constantly calls Hokuto out, slaps her or does anything else that will push Hokuto's buttons. Sawai plays the overprotective veteran who just bum rushes anyone when her teammates are in trouble. This is one time when Eagle's extra girth pays off as she murders Hokuto a couple of times with those Vader splash thingys. Handa's role in all of this? To take the biggest beating you can possibly imagine. What is that old saying about a chain is only as strong as the weakest link? Handa gets piledriven on an unbreakable table (is there another kind in Japan?). The table happens to be the table that Shinobu Kandori is sitting at. This will be important later. Brawls break out left and right. High impact moves break out left and right. My favorite was Handa

turning a high cross body into a Northern Lights Suplex. By the end of the end of the match, the heat is amazing and the crowd nearly blows the roof of the place when the AJW team gets the win. Saito gets on THE STICK and bitches. Hokuto rebuts with something along the lines of "scoreboard". Hokuto then calls out Kandori with some unkind words. Kandori, who looks like she just came from the Riverdale High 10 year reunion, storms the ring and ANOTHER pull apart starts. There is more trash talking. Order is finally restored and I again wish I spoke Japanese. Hokuto and Kandori get together in the locker room and yell some more. Long story, short: all this is the set up to a great and famous match. A million, billion stars. You want this.

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YOUR WRESTLER OF THE WEEK- JUMBO TSURUTA

Jumbo Tsuruta vs. Hercules Hernandez - (PHIL SCHNEIDER)

The true mettle of a superior professional wrestler is how he elevates the poor workers around him. Let the other reviewers talk about classics with Misawa, Hansen and Tenryu. Here Jumbo is given a Mt. Everest of crap to try to climb, and he does a commendable job. Ex Ted DiBiase "slave" (I imagine Russo is salivating to reuse that gimmick once G.I. Bro runs its course) Hercules Hernandez is one of the poopier wrestler of the 1980's a perfect example of the stinky WWF worker who's entire move set is syringe based. However Jumbo didn't spend all that time in Texas for nothing, he walks the comically permed Hercules through a basic U.S. prostyle match with a simple storyline, Jumbo must avoid bearhug. He starts the match working on Herc's arm while Herc works on the back. One worker attempts to negate the bearhug, the other attempts to increase its impact. Hercules is able to hook on the move a pair of times, but Jumbo is able to break it using headbutts. Herc's downfall is when he deviates from his power offense, and attempts a top rope splash, Jumbo lifts his knees, stunning him, and hits the Jumbo backdrop for the win. Not anything you would want to watch twice, but Jumbo is able to instill purpose and psychology, and make a puroresu purse out of a Pig's Ear.

Jumbo Tsuruta/Tiger Mask vs. Stan Hansen/Ted DiBiase: All Japan Classics Oct. 1999 (Taped 7/3/87) -(PHIL RIPPA)

Four guys I really love with the recently departed Jumbo being my favorite. This match was for the PWF Tag Titles which Jumbo and Tiger Mask (Misawa) held at the time. Fun little 12 minutes of wrestling with each guy doing some wrestling. The basic story is that this is another excuse for Hansen and Jumbo to beat the hell out of each other. DiBiase is the whipping boy for most of the match with Hansen coming in and making the save whenever necessary. Jumbo and Hansen also have an absurd dropkick contest which I think is a push - both men defying gravity is a pretty freaky site. Speaking of freaky, there is an overhead camera that is used during this match that I don't remember ever seeing before. It would have been more effective if it hasn't been used during the chin lock sections. Oh well. DiBiase delivers the elbows and suplexes. Tiger Misawa brings the kicks and occasional highspot. Jumbo and Stan bring the surly. All of it is fun to watch. The ending is both cool and annoying. DiBiase gets thrown to the floor and Hansen starts hollering for him to move because Tiger Mask is about to go a flying which is one of those "cool little things that no one ever does anymore". Misawa does go a flying as he launches himself into a giant plancha which forces DiBiase to utilize catching skills that I didn't know he had by keeping Tiger Misawa from killing about 45 school children. A brawl

breaks out on the floor. During the confusion, Tiger Misawa slips into the ring to avoid the count and the champs go over. A disappointing ending but still a nice change of pace to the usual Hansen vs. Tsuruta feud.

Jumbo Tsuruta vs. Stan Hansen:

This was the singles match which resulted from the tag match Rippa reviewed. Jumbo and Hansen are wearing matching black trunks and black elbowpads and look like the worlds most asstomping tag team. This is a much more scientific style match then there later brawls. The start with a standard 70's style headlock sequence, which looks kind of weird because both guys are so big, and I am use to seeing that spot with smaller workers. In the first portion of the match Jumbo doggedly works over Hansen's lariat arm, while Hansen spends the entire match smacking Jumbo's ribs. After a while Jumbo switches his focus to Hansen's leg, with a rolling knee submission (which looks very Dos Carasie and it is kind of odd to see Jumbo use it) and some stepover toeholds. They do some crowd brawling and smack each other with chair, the chair stuff wasn't that great, but the brawling was the most electric parts of the match. The match ends with Jumbo hitting a top rope knee to Hansen knocking him to the floor and Stan grabs his rope and chokes Jumbo with it getting a cheap ass DQ. This was before Jumbo turned into old man asskicker Jumbo, and wrestled the match as a strict face. While Jumbo was a great worker, he was sort of bland in this role, and these two didn't click nearly as much as they would later. The post heel-turn Jumbo v. Hansen matches were so great because you had a pair of old school badass just beating the fucking shit out of each other, while in this match you had Hansen beating on Jumbo and Jumbo wrestling him. The ending was pretty half assed too, as DQ's rarely leave anything but a bad taste in your mouth.

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NEXT WEEK: THE WESTERN JAPAN INDIE SPECTACULAR! THE EMLL PPV! ADRIAN ADONIS IN SOUTHWEST in 1983! PETE! BATTLARTS! RAY! GAEA! MORE JUMBO!

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

six fists in the face of wrestling

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Did I dream you dreamed about me?

Were you hare when I was fox?

Now my foolish boat is leaning

Broken lovelorn on your rocks,

For you sing, "Touch me not, touch me not, come back tomorrow:

O my heart, O my heart shies from the sorrow"

- Song To The Siren

Tim Buckley